

medical products. Platform technologies were developed through programs like Operation Warp Speed and RADx that put us leaps and bounds ahead. These types of technologies are force multipliers, allowing us to bring new options to patients with cancer, infectious diseases, and life-threatening conditions by adapting the same underlying technology. We need a Commissioner who understands and will advance these breakthroughs.

I urge my colleagues, support Dr. Califf's nomination because he will provide the leadership needed to promote today's biomedical advancements and help to pave the way for tomorrow's innovation.

As many know, I have been one of the FDA's toughest critics over the years. However, I am critical because I believe in the Agency's mission, and I know that American patients pay the price if the FDA falls behind.

The FDA has an opportunity to be forever changed for the better, but it needs effective leadership to get there. Dr. Califf knows the Agency well, understands the value of innovation underway in academia, and knows firsthand how the private sector is advancing cutting-edge science that can benefit all Americans.

I urge my colleagues this morning to support the nomination of Robert Califf.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise in opposition to Dr. Califf, and I have spoken before on this. I just want to say this for a minute or two here.

I respect everyone's position on this and their decision, but I have never had anything that has affected my State and constituents in my State and our country more than the opioid addiction.

This opioid addiction started because of the FDA's decision to bring a product to market in 1995 that has destroyed many families, many communities, many businesses, people's lives forever. In story after story—there is not a Senator in this body who doesn't have someone in their family, immediate family or extended family, or a constituent who hasn't been affected.

With that, you need to change the dynamics of the leadership over there. Dr. Califf was there 5 years ago. He is coming back. Nothing has changed. Four hundred thousand people have died since he was there, and we are going down the same path.

Unless we change that dynamic, that leadership position on trying to protect the people of America without putting more and more horrible drugs on the market—there was one drug back in, I think it was 2014, 2013 or 2014, called Zohydro, and the advisory committee recommended 11 to 2: Do not bring this drug to market. They did it anyway. It was 11 to 2, don't do it. These are experts. They said two pills can kill a human being. They brought it continu-

ously. They continue to bring more opiates to the market.

We don't need this product on the market to kill more Americans. This Administration, under Robert Califf, will take the same old, same old as they did before. Nothing will change.

I urge all of my colleagues, please consider what you are doing. Consider your family and your constituents and please vote against Robert Califf.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 1 minute before the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I urge all of my colleagues to give families across the country the peace of mind and give the hard-working staff at the FDA the experienced, Senate-confirmed leadership it needs by joining me in confirming Dr. Califf today and working with him and FDA to continue protecting families across our country, upholding the gold standard of safety and effectiveness, and putting science and data first.

We previously confirmed Dr. Califf in this role in a bipartisan way, and we recently advanced his nomination out of the HELP Committee with bipartisan support. So I hope today, once again, this qualified nomination passes with the bipartisan support it deserves. I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MURPHY). Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Robert McKinnon Califf, of North Carolina, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services.

VOTE ON CALIFF NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Califf nomination?

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM).

The result was announced—yeas 50, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 55 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Baldwin	Blunt	Brown
Bennet	Booker	Burr

Cantwell	Kelly	Schatz
Cardin	King	Schumer
Carper	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Casey	Leahy	Sinema
Collins	Menendez	Smith
Coons	Merkley	Stabenow
Cortez Masto	Murkowski	Tester
Duckworth	Murphy	Toomey
Durbin	Murray	Van Hollen
Feinstein	Ossoff	Warner
Gillibrand	Padilla	Warnock
Heinrich	Peters	Warren
Hickenlooper	Reed	Whitehouse
Hirono	Romney	Wyden
Kaine	Rosen	

NAYS—46

Barrasso	Hassan	Portman
Blackburn	Hawley	Risch
Blumenthal	Hoeven	Rubio
Boozman	Hyde-Smith	Sanders
Braun	Inhofe	Sasse
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Lankford	Shelby
Cramer	Lee	Sullivan
Crapo	Lummis	Thune
Cruz	Manchin	Tillis
Daines	Markey	Tuberville
Ernst	Marshall	Wicker
Fischer	McConnell	Young
Grassley	Moran	
Hagerty	Paul	

PRESENT AND GIVING A LIVE PAIR—1

Rounds, against

NOT VOTING—3

Capito	Graham	Luján
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Mr. ROUNDS. On this vote, I have a pair with the junior Senator from New Mexico, Mr. LUJÁN. If he were present and voting, he would vote yea. If I were permitted to vote, I would vote nay. I, therefore, withdraw my vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SINEMA). On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 46, and one Senator responded "present."

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:13 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Kansas.

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT

Mr. MORAN. Madam President, I rise this afternoon to express my support for the Postal Service Reform Act, a piece of legislation that we expected to be on the Senate floor this week and look forward to it appearing shortly.

The U.S. Postal Service has been struggling to stay financially solvent for years, and I am pleased Congress is finally—I say "finally." I think for as long as I have been in the Senate and perhaps as long as I have been in Congress, we have been working to address

this issue, and I am pleased we are about to do so.

The Postal Service has long been an essential piece of American communication and commerce, but its financial condition has recently, at least, threatened its future. Kansas's rural communities, in particular, where broadband access to brick-and-mortar businesses is limited, rely heavily upon the essential services of the Postal Service as a means of staying connected and competitive.

The familiar sight of a U.S. Postal Service truck—the jeep, the truck that goes down our country roads making its deliveries—is part of the daily life for Kansas's farmers, ranchers, businesses, and neighborhoods.

For rural America, the Postal Service—their mailman or their mailwoman—is often the glue that keeps those communities connected to the rest of the country. In many instances, we rely upon our postal carriers to make certain that somebody is alive and well, that they are OK in their homes, and report odd behavior or a crime that might occur. Our postal carriers are a significant component of the fabric of our communities.

Unique in its ability to reach nearly every address in America, the Postal Service is an indispensable piece of infrastructure, in fact, created by the Constitution of the United States giving us the instructions to provide postal roads.

During the height of the pandemic, the Postal Service employees maintained their delivery routes, bringing essential medicines, groceries, and vital supplies to families' doorsteps.

We pay a lot of attention to veterans' issues, and I would highlight how important the Postal Service is for those who served our Nation. In most instances, it is how they receive their prescription drugs. It is beyond just handwritten cards and notes, although those are clearly important and, again, an important component of our life. We all enjoy receiving those. But the Nation is reminded firsthand about the irreplaceable role of the Postal Service.

As I said, in my earliest days since representing Kansas in Congress, I have advocated for the preservation of rural post offices and commonsense reforms to ensure the Postal Service's stability.

With every conversation I have had with the Postmaster General, I have reminded them perhaps they should spend less money on consultants and listen to their employees who might be the best people to tell them what they might do to improve their efficiency and save costs.

When a post office closes—and we have had a few of those happen too frequently in Kansas—it creates problems for businesses and families; it may cause significant harm to the local economy; and it certainly makes a difference in the lives of seniors in those communities.

For the past several sessions of Congress, the Senator from Delaware, Sen-

ator CARPER, and I have introduced postal reform legislation and worked together with the goal of putting the Postal Service on firmer financial footing, improving service, and allowing for the development of new revenue streams and enhancing transparency through performance metrics.

I have indicated to the Postmaster General in my conversations that the solution to the post office's financial conditions cannot be simply reducing services. The more services are reduced, the less likely Americans will or can use the Postal Service.

So closing post offices, shortening the number of days in which mail is delivered, reducing the hours of the post office, slowing the delivery of the mail, closing mail-sorting centers can't be the solution to making certain that the post office has a bright future and that Americans are served.

The Postal Service Reform Act of 2022, which I hope is on the floor soon for our consideration, was passed by the House last week, and we look forward to its arrival here. It builds upon our previous attempts to accomplish postal reform.

Included in these reforms is the creation of a new Postal Service Health Benefits Program and focusing on reestablishing—stabilizing the USPS's finances, instead of funding benefits in advance.

The bill will allow the Postal Service to enter into agreements with State, local, and Tribal governments as a new method of revenue for the Agency.

I am also pleased that the bill will codify 6-day delivery, which is a provision I have long supported in my role as an appropriator and one that greatly benefits rural Kansas homes, where mail delivery is more difficult.

The Postal Service Reform Act represents a great step forward to ensure that Kansans and Americans can continue to rely upon the U.S. Postal Service. I am a sponsor of this bill, and I intend to support it when it arrives in the Senate for a vote and urge my colleagues to join me in doing so.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Alaska.

UKRAINE

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I have asked to be recognized this afternoon to speak to the ongoing crisis in Ukraine.

As we all know, the current situation is that it is pretty tough right now. Russia has amassed more than 100,000 troops on or close to Ukraine's border and may be planning to launch a full-scale invasion within a matter of days. And this follows, of course, their illegal seizure of the Crimean Peninsula back in 2019 and a hybrid war in the Donbas that has been going on now for over 8 years.

As a Senator from Alaska—the State that is clearly most proximate to Russia—we are all too familiar with Russia's aggressive tactics. They routinely fly near our airspace. They sail

through our waters. They test our defenses and reactions.

In August 2020, a flotilla of Russian warships and military aircraft encroached into our EEZ, our exclusive economic zone, there in the Bering Sea. They repeatedly harassed our fishermen, forcing them to leave their waters from which their very livelihood flows. The fishermen were shocked, I mean, just stunned with what they saw, and they literally left millions of dollars of fisheries' assets out on the line.

Provocative actions, and we felt that provocation. They are disturbing. They are alarming. But there are also some perhaps smaller, maybe symbolic actions that can also be a little unsettling. It was several years ago now that we were at an Arctic conference, and the Russian delegation gave me a diplomatic gift at a conference that featured maps showing Alaska back as part of their territory. Maybe they thought it was funny; I did not take it as such.

What is happening on the Ukrainian border is something else entirely. It is impossible not to be rattled by what we are seeing, worried by where it could lead.

But I think we recognize in this body what we need to do, what we need to focus on. We need to turn these concerns into resolve, and that resolve needs to lead to action. I know that there are many in this Chamber working very, very hard—and I thank them for that—working toward a sanctions package.

The bipartisan goal is to deter both—to deter Russia from invading Ukraine but also to impose severe sanctions if that happens. And I know that the joint effort has perhaps stalled out right now, but, hopefully, the two sides and the White House will come together to finalize it.

I believe it is an imperative that we have a united front on this matter. A united Congress on the matter of sanctions, I think, is a powerful message in and of itself.

If we can bring a sanctions package to the floor, I am going to be asking colleagues to consider two additions to that: one, to restrict imports of Russian seafood and a second related to Russian energy.

So with respect to seafood, Russia has had an import ban on American seafood since 2014—since 2014. Most Americans don't know that Russia responded to U.S. sanctions imposed after their annexation of Crimea by banning U.S. seafood imports, among other goods, at that time. So that has been in place all these many years.

And it is absolutely unfair that Russia has unlimited access to sell its seafood in the United States, while America's fishermen and our seafood processors, particularly those in my State of Alaska, have no access to markets in Russia. So this embargo either needs to end or we need to incorporate reciprocal measures.